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5 August 1955

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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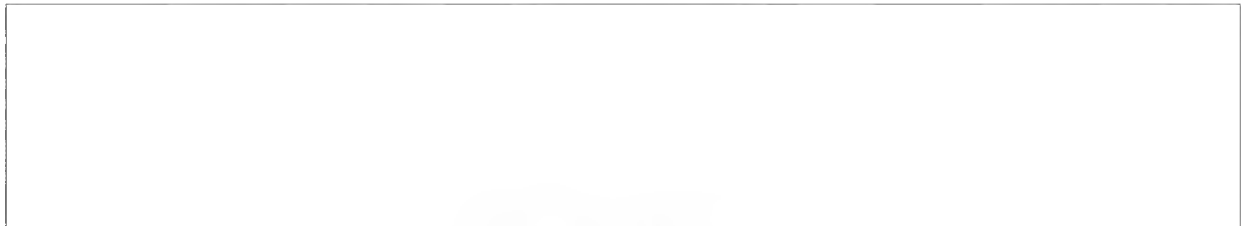
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

State Dept. review completed

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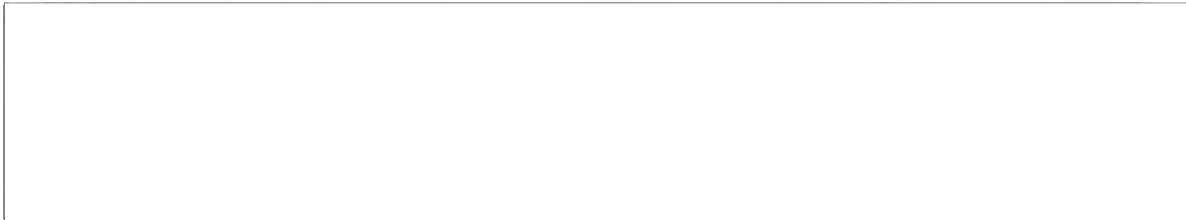
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SUMMARY



SOUTHEAST ASIA

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Sizable reduction of French troops in Indochina expected by November:

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As a result of a conversation with French premier Faure on 30 July, Ambassador Dillon estimates that the French Expeditionary Corps in South Vietnam will probably be reduced to 30,000 before November.

Faure said that before this figure is reached, he plans to review the situation in consultation with the

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United States. The premier noted that he had agreed in May to support South Vietnam premier Diem in return for an understanding that France would be free to withdraw at a reasonable rate the entire Expeditionary Corps.

Comment: This is the first official policy statement on current French planning for the Expeditionary Corps.

On 2 July, Paris offered to reduce its forces to the minimum required to service such bases as may be granted by Vietnam.

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3. Thai premier attempts to strengthen position by cabinet changes:

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The changes in the Thai cabinet announced on 2 August appear to be a move on the part of Premier Phibun to limit the power of Police Director General Phao, according to the American embassy in Bangkok. Phibun's intention is evident in the premier's personal assumption of the Ministry of the Interior, over which Phao has been de facto chief as deputy minister. The cabinet changes were made after Phao left for the United States on 1 August, and the embassy comments that it remains to be seen whether Phibun's encroachment will be successful.

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With regard to these maneuverings, the majority of the governing military oligarchy have become bitter toward Phibun as a result of his recent activities.

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Comment: Phao's ambition to succeed Phibun is well known and recently he has clearly indicated his impatience to assume control of the government.

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